

SMALL-BUSINESS HONOR

Chamber award really a tribute to employees

for 7/12/96
I am writing in response to Ed Bircham's paid advertorial in the July 12 Gazette.

I plead guilty to most of the allegations. The Independent did recently publish profanity when we quoted Vice President Dick Cheney's use of the F-word toward Patrick Leahy, after the Vermont senator had questioned the administration's decision to award lucrative no-bid contracts to Cheney's former employer, Halliburton.

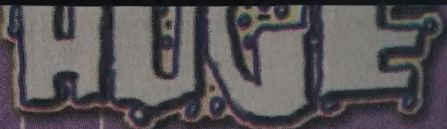
I also plead guilty to allowing same-sex personal ads in our paper. Like the Chicago Sun Times, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Sacramento Bee, Washington Post and hundreds of other newspapers, the Independent does not discriminate against gays or lesbians in our singles pages or anywhere in our employment or editorial practices.

I am honored that the Chamber of Commerce awarded me one of its Small Business of the Year awards. In reality, the award was earned by the 31 full-time and more than 50 part-time employees of the Independent who have worked to provide the Pikes Peak region with a vibrant locally owned newspaper. The chamber made the award based on the Independent's innovative business model, job creation and civic involvement, such as promoting the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) initiative, as well as the Independence Community Fund.

John Weiss

Publisher, Colorado Springs Independent

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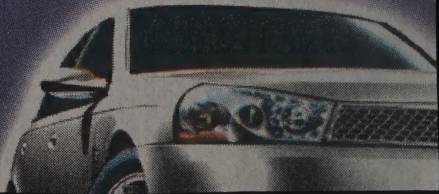


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